

SCRIPT OR PRINTING, WHICH?

The question as to whether primary children shall be taught script from the first is frequently asked and variously answered. A few years ago printing was the universal rule, and in many schools it was continued up to and through the Third Reader grade. The time which the printing was practised before the change to script writing was made, gradually grew less, until now it is altogether omitted in many schools.

The strong tendency now is, in many of the best schools, to begin with the script at once. Good primary teachers who have tried the plan of printing for a few months and then changing to the script, and also the plan of beginning with the script at once, are uniform in their testimony in favor of the latter method. They testify that the script form is much more easily made, and that there is little or no difficulty arising from the fact that the child is at the same time learning to recognize the printed form from the chart or primer.

Why is there a script form at all? Why not conform all writing to the printed form, and thus have but one? The answer is that the script forms are much more simple, and more easily and rapidly made, *and save time*.

What is true of grown people is true of children. Should not the simplest form be given to the child, and does it not need to economize its time? The arguments seem overwhelming in favor of script from the beginning, and script only.

In the Indianapolis schools, Supt. Tarbell has given orders that in the "first year" all writing shall be done with slate pencils, and that the stress of the instruction shall be upon *form* of letters, little attention being given to the manner of holding the pencil. At the beginning of the "second year" the children begin to write with pen and ink, using tracing books, and the chief attention is given to "position" and the proper holding of the pen. The lead pencil is used only for drawing. By the use of the tracing book and the "form" already determined, the child can give its entire attention to the position of hand and body, and can easily be drilled into good habits. By discarding the use of the lead pencil for writing purposes, the difficulties of too great pressure and cramped position of fingers are largely avoided. The transition from the slate pencil to the pen is great, and the child feels that it is entering upon a new study, and is ready to cheerfully conform to all requirements.—*Indiana School Journal*.

Some recent experiences have brought us in contact with several young "lady teachers," of considerable acquirement and fair capacity for successful work, who seem never to have heard of any superior method of instruction, or only heard of it as a mischievous whim to be ridiculed and resisted. Our most accomplished principals and superintendents perhaps find the most serious obstacles in these inexperienced subordinates, who having no intention of making school-teaching a profession, resist or avoid all decisive effort to grasp the secret of their difficult work, or from "experienced teachers" as fully resolved not to be coaxed or driven out of the little comfortable corner of routine work which they have come to regard as their special preserve during their own good pleasure. All this is a very different thing from that genuine independence which insists on seeing its own way, and being forced into no dealing with a child for which it cannot discover a good reason. Such independence should be encouraged, especially when joined to persistent effort at improvement and thorough consecration of purpose. But the kind of resistance we indicate has no claim to respect or toleration, and is always a sufficient cause for a change in the teaching-force of any school.

HER SPECIALTY.

"What is your specialty?" said I, the other day, looking out over the top of my spectacles in a mildly-wise way at a fair young teacher who sat in authority over forty or fifty mischief-loving boys and girls, ranging from seven to ten years of age.

"Good manners," said she, promptly, smiling back at me in a way that made her remark a perfectly pleasant one. "At least, that is what they say, here in the building."

"Do you find the practical working of it brings about good results at the end of the year?"

"As good as the average and sometimes better. I hope I can teach something else, but I am willing to confess I give much of my time to my pet hobby, and find it helps me greatly in my regular school work. Would you like to look at my reports for the last few years?"

"You do not believe in corporal punishment, I see," said I, pointing to a column with no entries for several months.

"When positively necessary," said she; "but for three years I have not had a case of whipping in my room."

"And to what do you lay this?"

"I think I can venture to say—politeness, supplemented by unvarying kindness and patience."

Just then she was called out of the room for a few minutes. I am always fond of getting opinions of pupils themselves, on various subjects connected with their school-life; not because they are generally correct,—do not imagine that for a moment,—but one can often draw an inference and strike a pretty fair average by hearing all sides. So, as soon as she left, I pointed to a rough-looking little fellow near the front row and said,—

"What kind of a school do you think this is, my boy? A pretty good one?"

"It's the politest one in town," answered he, promptly, "and we've got the politest teacher, too."

Several heads, round about, nodded approval.

"Good sentiment," said I, "but poor grammar. Well, what makes it such a polite school? Can any one tell?"

Silence for a moment, then another little chap, in the next row said naturally enough:

"Guess it must be teacher."

"How does she do it?" asked I. "Does she make you mind pretty well?"

"Oh, she don't boss us around, you know. She always says 'please' and 'thank you', and a fellow don't mind doing things when he ain't got to, unless he has a mind to."

Commend me to ignorant and unthinking childhood for discovering the underlying motive that governs much of the conduct of mankind! I had discovered the secret force of this teacher, and saw that her school could be said almost to govern itself.

After the close of the session, I noticed a sulky, disagreeable looking boy who remained at the desk after the others had passed out. The teacher went over to him, and I could hear some low, earnest words from her and a few short answers from the boy. Presently he took up his book and slate and went to work with a will.

"I have conquered him," she said smilingly, as she came back to me. "He has been idle and sulky all the afternoon."

"What did you do?" asked I.

"I left him alone until all the others were gone; then I asked him if I had ever been unkind to him. He said 'No.' Had I ever done a rude thing to him? 'No.' Then why should he be both unkind and impolite to me? I showed how he had displayed such feelings towards me by refusing to do what I thought a proper amount of work. He is both ashamed and repentant now."